

# Creating an impactful work-based project



**Henley**  
Business School

UNIVERSITY OF READING

Where business comes to life

# Creating an impactful work-based project

All Henley apprenticeships end with a work-based project.

Work-based projects allow the apprentice to apply their learning directly to real-life challenges within your organisation. The project brings together elements of learning from the entire apprenticeship programme and shows evidence of your apprentice's accumulated knowledge and understanding, and how it can be applied within your organisation.

During the programme, your apprentice will need to demonstrate:

- Taking responsibility for each step of designing and implementing a work-based project
- Full engagement with all relevant stakeholders in a professional and inclusive manner
- Adaptability and agility in the face of changing organisational needs
- Sensitivity towards the impact of change on individuals
- The development of their credentials as an effective leader of organisational change
- Their ability to reflect on their impact on organisational change, and its impact on them.

This guide seeks to share ideas for how you can best support your apprentice and help them use their work-based project to deliver a positive impact in your organisation.

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## Essential Apprenticeship Guides

This guide is one of a series designed to help our clients engage with apprenticeships and deliver best value to their organisation and their apprentices.

## Further reading

Launching an apprenticeship scheme

[henley.ac.uk/business/apprenticeships/essential-apprenticeship-guides](https://henley.ac.uk/business/apprenticeships/essential-apprenticeship-guides)

Henley apprenticeships culminate in a final work-based project.

Work-based projects enable your apprentice to apply their learning directly to your organisational challenges.

The work-based project is designed to meet the criteria of the apprenticeship end-point assessment and (if applicable) related Henley qualifications.

Your apprentice will be required to prepare and/or undertake a project in their workplace, through the design, execution and reporting of a project plan, supported by the appropriate data.

For most programmes, Henley will allocate an academic supervisor who will support the apprentice in completing the work-based project.

You should provide the apprentice with sufficient support to meet the time required for study.

Work-based projects offer an opportunity to harness fresh thinking. Make the most of what your apprentice has learned by focusing them on issues or challenges of organisational relevance.

## At a glance

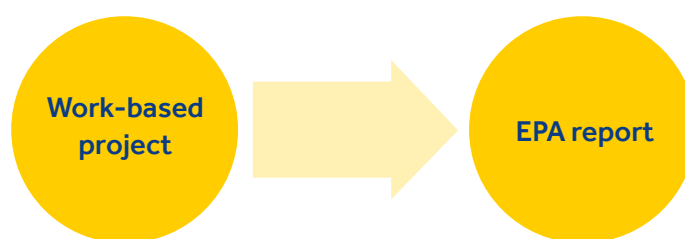
# The role of the work-based project



The work-based project is designed to meet the criteria and standards of both the end-point assessment (EPA) and Henley qualifications/awards (where included in the apprenticeship programme).

The work-based project is conducted in your organisation and demonstrates the apprentice's application of learning and contribution as a result of their developed skills and knowledge. Unlike a traditional dissertation, the output of the project must either be implemented or have the potential to be implemented in your organisation, with outcomes that will be measurable and will demonstrate impact.

Your apprentice will write up their work-based project to meet the requirements of their final degree award. They will then incorporate this into their project report for their EPA. For example, Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship learners encapsulate their 10,000-word dissertation into a 4,000-word EPA report.<sup>1</sup>



## What does your apprentice have to do?



The apprentice will be expected to prepare and/or undertake a project in their workplace that can make a difference to the organisation. They will achieve this by designing, executing and reporting on a project plan, supported by the appropriate data that has been collected and analysed by the apprentice.

Every apprentice's project is different, and requirements vary between different apprenticeship standards, but typically they might include:

- Project rationale and business case
- Literature review
- Research design
- Data collection and analysis
- Project planning and implementation
- Discussion and conclusions write-up



Your apprentice will be expected to comply with Henley's ethical requirements and obtain ethical approval for primary data collection, even if they are undertaking fieldwork within their own organisation.

The time spent working on and writing up the work-based project counts towards the mandatory minimum six hours per week (equivalent) in off-the-job training requirement.

<sup>1</sup>Word counts and other requirements may vary; please check the documentation for each apprenticeship.

# How Henley supports your apprentice

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In most programmes, Henley will allocate your apprentice an academic supervisor who will support them in completing their work-based project. The supervisor will be a knowledgeable academic in the field chosen by the apprentice as the key area to be explored and developed in their project (for example, operational strategy or business finance).

The supervisor will work with your apprentice over the duration of their work-based project to provide advice and encouragement, clarify requirements, answer questions and provide feedback on interim work.

In addition, your apprentice will receive a variety of supporting materials, including:

- Module/project handbook
- Timeline for interim and final submissions
- Marking scheme



## How best to support your apprentice

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The apprentice may notice a change in the learning experience when they embark on their work-based project. Compared to the other, more structured, parts of the apprenticeship, the work-based project requires the apprentice to work independently to plan, organise and carry out their research.

Employers and line managers can support by:

- Continuing to help the apprentice dedicate the time required to their studies
- Encouraging the apprentice to engage within the organisation to select and design an intervention aligned to organisational needs and strategy (see below)
- Engaging with the project and offering the apprentice input or advice
- Helping the apprentice to use their project to build their reputation and networks internally
- Sharing good news about how the project has delivered value to your department or organisation

## Delivering impact for the organisation

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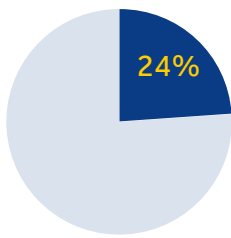
Effective work-based projects are not just about meeting the requirements for the apprenticeship and degree (where relevant). For organisations, work-based projects offer an opportunity to harness fresh thinking and make the most of what apprentices have learned, by focusing on issues or challenges of organisational relevance.

In practice, this means:

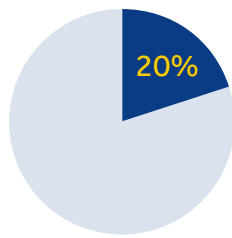
- Making sure that the apprentice has the appropriate exposure, resources and support to deliver the work-based project
- Engaging stakeholders from across the organisation in identifying strategic priorities
- Engaging in three-way discussions between the organisation, Henley and the apprentice to define a project that is relevant to their priorities
- Being prepared to consider and implement the outcomes from work-based projects (subject to business case)

## Focus of Henley 2021 work-based projects

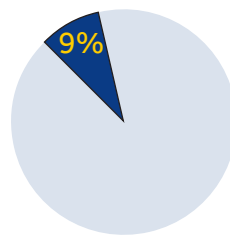
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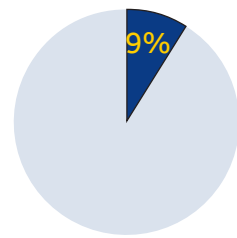
Operational issues



Leadership styles



Technological



Transformation

### Examples of work-based project titles

- What leadership styles ensure optimum energy, innovation and productivity levels in a virtual world?
- Does leadership style have an impact on feelings of burnout in a large corporate organisation and does the need for change influence this?
- How does organisational trust impact feelings of empowerment and intrinsic motivation in retail middle management?
- How leaders can increase motivation and competence in a shrinking business and how, by doing this, they can improve engagement, personal stretch, job satisfaction and business results.
- How can multi-disciplinary learning groups engage the wider team and ensure meaningful and shared learning?

### Where business comes to life

Henley is a triple-accredited business school with over 75 years' experience in developing confident, resilient business leaders and supporting organisations in reaching their strategic and transformational goals.

We are one of the largest providers of leadership, management and digital apprenticeships. Our programmes support around 1,600 learners and are enriched by the cutting-edge research and wide-ranging commercial experience of our academics.

The depth and breadth of this knowledge base equips learners with an extensive understanding of leadership and, along with the latest sector-specific insights, enables them to become the strategic and responsible leaders of the future.

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